

TRIBUTE TO DIANE SKVARLA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to say a fond farewell to the Senate's long-term curator Diane Skvarla, who has been such a tremendous asset to the institution over the years and a very good friend to our office as well. All of our dealings with Diane over the years have been marked by her great professionalism and her deep knowledge of and respect for the Senate and its history.

Diane and her staff have been invaluable in the multiyear restoration of the Strom Thurmond room and keeping up the rest of our historic suite. My staff has always enjoyed working with Diane and her staff, and I hope we have been as gracious in return.

For a lot of young people who wring their hands or wander around for a while after college, Diane started working full time in the Senate the Monday after she graduated and has been here off and on ever since.

She witnessed a lot of changes in the curator's office over the years. When Diane started here full time in 1979, there were only three staffers in the office, but in the years leading up to and after the Nation's bicentennial when preservation came back into vogue, there was no shortage of new work.

Diane went on to earn a master's degree in museum studies from George Washington University in 1987, and it paid off when she helped put together a major exhibit for the Senate's own bicentennial in 1989. Diane collaborated on the exhibit with Don Ritchie, and together they set a new high standard for projects of this kind. At the time Diane was the associate curator and Don was the associate historian. They both rose through the ranks of their respective offices, so it has been a fruitful collaboration for many years.

Diane spent most of her early childhood in England where she first learned the sport of dressage. She gave up horses during college at Colgate University in upstate New York and went back to England in 1991 to become certified in teaching the sport. She kept up her riding after she returned to the States and came back to the Senate as head curator in late 1994, replacing the widely admired Jim Ketchum.

With Jim's support and encouragement, Diane learned the ropes and has doggedly pursued the legislative mandate of the Senate curator's office ever since, and that mandate is to protect, preserve, and educate.

Some of the biggest challenges Diane has faced have involved dealing with disasters. In 1983, a bomb planted near the Senate Chamber destroyed portions of the corridor—including a portrait of Daniel Webster. Under Diane's supervision, a conservator put the pieces back together and restored it.

Other projects Diane has been particularly proud of over the years include the publication of the U.S. Senate Catalogue of Fine Art, a 481-page book that took years to complete, and the restoration of a giant portrait of

Henry Clay, from my State, that was given to the Senate after being discovered in the basement of a historical society. This magnificent painting of Clay now hangs in the stairway off the Brumidi corridor. The restoration of the Old Senate Chamber was also a proud achievement.

The entire Senate family is grateful to Diane for her many years of devoted service to this institution. Through her work, she has helped preserve and bring to life the shared objects of our collective history as a people—precious objects that belong to all Americans and to our posterity. Her legacy is literally all around us.

We thank her for her work and wish her and her husband Chris all the very best in the years ahead.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1926, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 294, S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to speak for up to 10 minutes. I think we are in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is moving to proceed to consider S. 1926.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Wonderful. I thank the Presiding Officer. I will then speak on the bill that is before us.

I appreciate the cooperation of so many Members who voted last night to move forward on the debate of the fix to Biggert-Waters. We had a very strong and very impressive vote. I think 83 Members, Republicans and Democrats, came together from all parts of the country, from all different areas and districts and backgrounds to vote to move forward on the debate on flood insurance. I am grateful.

We have been working on this for about a year and a half. It has been a tough slog because 2 years ago a bill called Biggert-Waters was passed, named after the two cosponsors in the House, Congresswoman Biggert and Congresswoman WATERS. They passed a bill with very good intentions. They were thinking they were going to strengthen the flood insurance program. The bill had wonderful intentions, but unfortunately, the way it

was drafted in the conference committee has resulted in disastrous results.

Some of us knew that 2 years ago and started working literally the moment the conference bill was passed to begin changing it. So we have worked diligently and together and built a great coalition. I thank the 200 organizations that quickly came together over the last year and a half—as quickly as any of these things can happen in a practical sense—to understand what went wrong in the first bill and how we could fix it so we could accomplish two important goals for the National Flood Insurance Program: first, that the program could be self-sustaining. In other words, it could pay for itself with limited or minimal taxpayer burden.

The other equally important goal—and the Presiding Officer, who represents New Jersey, knows, as I do, how important this is—is that the program would be affordable to middle-class families. If it is not affordable to middle-class families, they will not participate in it and the program will go bankrupt due to lack of participation.

The idea of insurance is to have a large pool to spread the risk, and that is how an insurance system works. If we don't fix it, it is going to make that pool get smaller and smaller and smaller. Because people will not be able to afford it, the program will collapse and the taxpayers will be saddled with debt.

The goal of our coalition—led by Senator MENENDEZ, the senior Senator from New Jersey who is on the Banking Committee and has been one of the great spokesmen and leaders for this bill, and Senator ISAKSON from Georgia, who is literally the most respected Member in this whole body on issues related to real estate because he had one of the largest real estate companies in Atlanta and knows the issue well. He is very respected on both sides of the aisle. These two gentlemen have led this effort and have built a bipartisan coalition.

So we are now ready this week, of all weeks. It is the State of the Union week. We would have probably preferred another week, but that is how this worked out. We are ready to debate the bill on the floor of the Senate. At last count, when we left, there were about six or seven relevant amendments. We are only going to accept relevant amendments to this bill. We are not going to accept amendments on other subjects by Members who are attempting to derail the Senate, get us off topic, et cetera, et cetera. We will only accept relevant amendments to this bill.

The happy thing is we think we only have about seven or eight amendments. Some amendments are Republican, some amendments are Democratic.

We just received an amendment from one of the opponents of our bill, the good Senator from Pennsylvania, who has not been supportive of our bill and